

June 6, 2003

**CONTENT OF VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UTILIZATION OF
REGISTERED NURSES AT NURSE I THROUGH NURSE III**

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive clarifies policy relating to the content of vacancy announcements and the utilization of registered nurses in grades Nurse I through Nurse III.

2. BACKGROUND

a. The Title 38 personnel system is a rank-in-person system for registered nurses in grades Nurse I through Nurse III, and the grades of these employees are based on their professional qualifications rather than the duties and responsibilities of their assignments. Therefore, advertising registered nurse positions (other than Nurse IV and Nurse V) at particular grade levels is inconsistent with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy. Since many facilities are facing challenges related to nurse recruitment, it is essential that nursing staff be appropriately utilized. This involves establishing staffing patterns so nursing staff are not routinely required to perform administrative or support functions that should be given to other employees, and it involves providing nurses with assignments and opportunities that are consistent with their skills and expertise.

b. Minimum education requirements for placement at specific grade levels are outlined in the VA Nurse Qualification Standard, but the goal is to place suitably qualified candidates. Internal and external vacancy announcements may indicate a higher level of education is preferred when the higher level of education is necessary for successful performance in the position or it is ultimately expected at the full performance level.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that VHA management officials advertise registered nurse vacancies and utilize registered nurses in a manner consistent with paragraph 4.

4. ACTION: The facility Director is responsible for ensuring that:

a. Registered nurse positions at Nurse I through Nurse III are not to be advertised at specific grade levels.

b. Registered nurse vacancy announcements may indicate higher levels of education are preferred in the situations described in paragraph 2b.

c. Facility management officials take into consideration that Nurse III responsibilities and assignments include leadership in the application of the nursing process to patient care, organizational processes and/or systems, and improving outcomes at the program or service level.

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- d. Facility management officials review their position management practices to ensure they are consistent with the preceding.
- e. Facility management officials adopt policies supporting effective utilization of nursing staff.

5. REFERENCES

- a. VA Handbook 5005, "Staffing," Part II, Appendix II-G6.
- b. VA Handbook 5007, "Pay Administration," Part II, Chapter 2.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: The Office of Management Support (10A2) is responsible for the content of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 202-273-8910.

7. RESCISSIONS: None. This VHA Directive expires June 30, 2008.

S/ Louise Van Diepen for
Robert H. Roswell, M.D.
Under Secretary for Health

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